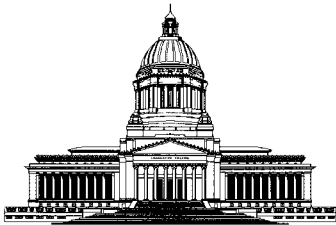


REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

SEPTEMBER 26, 2001



STATE OF WASHINGTON
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MANDATE

The 2001-03 biennial budget directs JLARC to follow up on its 1998 performance audit of the Department of Corrections (DOC), with a focus on community supervision. The budget proviso asks JLARC to review:

- Community supervision activities,
- The implementation of risk-based classification and community placement models,
- The early implementation of the Offender Accountability Act of 1999, and
- The cost impacts of the risk-based models and the Offender Accountability Act.

The study is due to the Legislature by December 21, 2001.

BACKGROUND

In its 1998 performance audit of DOC, JLARC made two recommendations for improving the department's accountability of community supervision activities. Specifically, the audit recommended that DOC should (1) establish a means for tracking whether conditions of sentencing are being adequately enforced and met for offenders on community supervision, and (2) make available to the Legislature workload and budget assumptions associated with community supervision, and maintain key historical information.

The following year, the Legislature enacted the Offender Accountability Act (E2SSB 5421) to enhance supervision of offenders in the community. The Act applies to offenders who commit crimes after July 1, 2000.

The Act requires that DOC "assess the offender's risk of reoffense and may establish and modify conditions of community custody, in addition to those imposed by the court, based upon the risk to community safety." Furthermore, the Act requires DOC to "supervise offenders during community custody on the basis of risk to community safety and conditions imposed by the court."

Through this study, the Legislature wants to know what DOC has done to mitigate the risk posed by offenders on community supervision and to improve its accountability in the area of community supervision.

STUDY SCOPE

As directed, JLARC's study will focus on community supervision. The study will first follow up on those recommendations of our 1998 performance audit of the DOC that relate to community supervision.

Furthermore, the study will review, from an operational perspective, how well DOC has implemented the risk-based classification and community placement models and the Offender Accountability Act. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy is conducting a long-term evaluation of the impact and cost-effectiveness of the Offender Accountability Act as directed by the Legislature.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

In response to the legislative directive, the study will answer the following questions:

- (1) What community supervision activities does DOC perform to address its statutory responsibilities?
- (2) Has DOC implemented the JLARC recommendation to establish a means for tracking whether conditions of sentencing are being adequately enforced and met for offenders on community supervision?
- (3) What is a risk-based classification and community placement model? Describe the model(s) currently used by DOC.
- (4) How does DOC know that the use of its risk-based model increases the safety in the community and reduces the risk of recidivism?
- (5) What does the risk-based model do and what does it not do?
- (6) What are the key elements of the Offender Accountability Act? What changes does this bring to community supervision?
- (7) To what extent has the Act been implemented so far? What has changed, what will change, and what will not change? What are the key milestones and projected timelines?
- (8) Has DOC implemented the JLARC recommendation to make available to the Legislature workload and budget assumptions, and maintain key historical information about community supervision?
- (9) What are the cost implications (budget drivers) of implementing the risk-based model and the Offender Accountability Act?

TIMEFRAME FOR THE STUDY

Staff will present its preliminary and final reports at the JLARC meetings in December 2001 and January 2002, respectively.

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